THE DOCTRINE OF THE *HOLY EUCHARIST* VINDICATED and EXPLAINED.

IN A

SERMON

Preach'd in the Pariſh Church of

GREAT TORRINGTON,

Sunday, Auguſt 3, 1740.

With a PREFATORY DISCOURSE, Addreſs'd to the Rev. Mr. *William Law*; and a ſmall Treatiſe at the End, entitled, A ſhort and ſafe Rule whereby to diſtinguiſh between Falſe Miracles and True.

By *SAMUEL JOHNSON*, A.M.
Vicar of *Great Torrington, Devon.*

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To the REVEREND

Mr. *WILLIAM LAW.*

Rev. Sir,

YOUR Doctrine concerning the SACRAMENT of the LORD'S SUPPER, and particularly what you ſay in relation to the Words of Inſtitution, and our Saviour's Diſcourſe in the Sixth of St. *John*, I have, in the following Sermon, conſider'd impartially, and examin'd with Candour. But as there is one Paſſage more relating to the ſame Subject, in your

Anſwer to the *Plain Account*, that did not ſo properly then come in my Way, and ſome others there of a different Kind, but very untoward Aſpect, I ſhall here give you my Thoughts upon them, in the ſame Order in which I find them.

Page 157. "Again our Lord ſaith, "*All things whatſoever ye ſhall ask in* "*Prayer, believing ye ſhall receive.* "Here you ſee *all things*, and there- "fore all the Benefits of Chriſt are "aſcribed to Faith, and we have eve- "thing that we can deſire or pray for, "by Virtue of it. Does not our Lord "here aſcribe as much *Benefit* to Faith, "as ever any one aſcrib'd to the Holy "Communion? Or who ever ſaid That "of the Power, or Benefit, or Effica- "cy of the Sacrament, which our "Lord ſays of the Benefit of *Faith* in "Prayer?"

Now as you were writing againſt an Author, that had ſunk the Benefits of the Sacrament ſo low, as to make them

them no Benefits at all, it was incumbent on you to aſſert and maintain its real Dignity, and to ſhew and demonſtrate its real Benefits; and not to have ſaid any thing by way of *leſſening* or *diſparaging* the Virtue and *Efficacy* of that Divine Inſtitution: But whether you have done any thing like this in the Paſſage above cited, I leave the Reader to judge. Whenever we undertake to vindicate and explain any one Duty of the Goſpel, or any ſpecial Ordinance of Grace, we may and ought to do this without Injury or Prejudice to others; and much more ſhould we take Care to aſſert the juſt Preheminence of thoſe *higher* Duties we have undertaken to defend, and not magnify and exalt the *leſſer* above thoſe that are confeſſedly *greater*; and moſt of all, that in treating of the *higheſt* and moſt ſublime Act of Divine Worſhip, we do not bring it down to the Level of *common* religious Performances, or repreſent it *leſs excellent*

cellent and *leſs beneficial*, than *Prayer* and *Faith* in general. But have *you* taken any ſuch Method? On the contrary, Have you not ſaid *All* that you can in Commendation of *Prayer* and *Faith?* And have you ſaid *any thing at all* here by way of juſt Vindication of the Dignity and Benefits of the Holy Sacrament? And yet as great Things as are ſpoken of *Faith* and *Prayer*, greater ſtill is aſcrib'd to the *Euchariſtical Service*. For what ſays St. *Paul*, *The Cup of Bleſſing which we bleſs, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Chriſt? The Bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Chriſt?* Surely you forgot this memorable Paſſage, when you preſumed to aſk, *Who ever ſaid that of the Power, or Benefit, or Efficacy of the Sacrament, which our Lord here ſays of the Benefit of* Faith *in Prayer?* Can there be a *greater Benefit*, on this Side Heaven, than the *Communion of the Body and Blood of Chriſt?* This is the Sum

of

of all ſpiritual Bleſſings and Benefits. They are all comprehended under that one great Privilege, The having Communion with our Bleſſed Saviour in the Sacrament of his own Appointment. But you, Sir, inſtead of taking Notice of this, or ſaying any thing elſe in Honour of this Holy Inſtitution, fly away to the Third Chapter of *Geneſis* to treat of *Adam*, and the firſt Promiſe made to him, which if you had explain'd much better, than you may find you have, was no way ſeaſonable or pertinent to your Subject. And in the mean while have left your Readers to infer from your high Commendation of *Faith* and *Prayer*, that theſe alone are abundantly ſufficient for the obtaining Salvation, without any farther Aid and Aſſiſtance to be ſought for from the *Holy Communion.*

Page 184. " Jeſus Chriſt can't do " any thing as a *Judge*, till he has done " every thing as a *Saviour*. There- " fore it is an evident Truth, that had " not

" not *all* Nations, and every *individu-*
" *al* Man receiv'd a *certain* Means of
" Salvation thro' him, He could not
" be *Judge* of *All.*

I don't produce this Paſſage to cenſure or diſprove it (tho' the latter Part expreſſes That as *paſt*, which may yet be *to come)* but only to blame you for not raiſing a better Superſtructure on ſo noble a Foundation. You might have built thereupon *Gold*, *Silver*, *precious Stones*; but great Part of what you have laid upon it, will, I fear, be found no better than *Hay* and *Stubble.* Your Maxim is certainly right, that *Jeſus Chriſt* can't do any thing as a *Judge*, till he has done every thing as a *Saviour.* But from hence you too haſtily conclude, that becauſe He will judge *Heathens* as well as *Chriſtians*, therefore He is already as much a Saviour to one as to the other. This is what you ſeem to maintain, by affirming that " all Mankind were par-
" don'd and redeem'd in *Adam*'s Par-
" don

« don and Redemption, p. 256. And « that all were reſtored in his Reſtora- « tion, p. 179. And therefore that the « Difference between *Heathens*, *Jews* « and Chriſtians, is not, that the one « have a *Saviour*, and are in a REDEEM'D « State, and the other are not; but that « they only differ in this, that one and « the ſame Saviour is *differently* made « known to them, and differently to « be *obtain'd by them*, p. 184." But ſurely this can't be the full Senſe of the following Words of St. *Peter*, which you ought to have well conſider'd, and reconciled to your own *Hypotheſis*, before you had ventured to advance a Doctrine that is ſo repugnant to the true Meaning of them.——*Neither is there Salvation in any other: For there is none other Name under Heaven given among Men, whereby we muſt be ſaved* (Acts iv 12.) Theſe Words upon your *Hypotheſis* can ſignify no more than that *Chriſt* is a Saviour to all, whether *known* or *unknown* to them. But

to what End then was the Goſpel commanded to be preach'd and propagated throughout the World, if Men could be ſaved without knowing and acknowledging the *Saviour?* There is another Way of conſidering the *Salvability* of the *Heathens* (which I have taken Notice of in a *Prefatory Diſcourſe* lately publiſh'd) without ſuppoſing that a few Inſtincts of Goodneſs, a little Tenderneſs of Conſcience, and ſome glimmering Light of Reaſon (as you ſeem to imagine, p. 184 and 253) tho' deriv'd from him, from whoſe Fulneſs all receive, are ſufficient to put them into a *redeem'd* State, and make them capable of Salvation. St. *Paul* ſpeaking not of *ſome*, but of *all Heathens* in general, declares that *at that Time* (meaning *before* their Converſion) *they were* WITHOUT CHRIST, *being Aliens from the Commonwealth of Iſrael, and Strangers from the Covenants of Promiſe,* HAVING NO HOPE, and WITHOUT GOD *in the World* (*Eph.* ii. 12.) Words diametrically

trically oppoſite to what you have aſſerted both in the Paſſages already referr'd to, and in the following——

"*True*, *natural* Religion, and reveal'd "Religion agree in theſe two great and "eſſential Points, that Man is in a "State of Sin, and yet in a State of "ACCEPTANCE with God thro' his *Mer-*"*cy*; therefore the Piety of the one, is "the Piety of the other, *viz.* a *penitent* "*Senſe* of Sin, and a humble *Faith* and "*Truſt* in God to be deliver'd from it "by *his Mercy*, p. 224. I ſhall draw no Conſequence from this ſtrange Poſition, but leave it to your Second Thoughts. 'Tis ſufficient to have pointed out its Contrariety to plain Scripture, and to the general Deſign of the Goſpel.

But as you have *rais'd* the *Heathen*, ſo you have *ſunk* the *Chriſtian*, giving *Goodneſs* to the one, and taking away *Reaſon* from the other. As to *Heathens* or mere natural Men you aſſert, that "when their *Reaſon* is debauch'd with

" Arguments, and contending for Pro-
" faneſs, their *Hearts* at the ſame Time
" have a Virtue in it that ſecretly diſ-
" ſents from all that they ſay, p. 218."
Others have quite different, and I think, juſter Notions of this Matter. They aſcribe the Debauchery of the *Heathen* to the Depravity of their *Hearts*, while they have enjoy'd, in a good meaſure, the Light of *Reaſon*, according to that of the Poet

Video meliora, proboque,—
Deteriora ſequor—

And this ſhews the Neceſſity of a *ſupernatural Aid* to over-balance the Corruptions of Nature, which are too ſtrong for *natural Reaſon*. Then as to *Chriſtians* you affirm, " that their Hearts
" want nothing but God, and nothing
" but their Heart can receive him. And
" this, you ſay, is the only Place and
" Seat of Religion, and of all Com-
" munication between God and Men,
" p. 220." On the contrary, God's conſtant Method in the Converſion of Sin-

Sinners, is firſt to inform their *Judgment*, to enlighten their *Underſtading*, to convince, help, and rectify their *Reaſon*; and after that to amend and purify their *Hearts* and *Affections*. *Come now and let us reaſon together*, ſays God, after he had reproved his People for their Sins, and exhorted them to Repentance. But how could God and they *reaſon together*, if he had no *Communication* with their Reaſon? There is, ordinarily ſpeaking, no reaching or coming at the *Heart*, without firſt gaining over the Powers of *Reaſon*. Had you ſaid, that *Reaſon alone* is not ſufficient, without the Senſibility, or Purity of the Heart, you had ſaid a plain, but great Truth. But to cut off all Communication between God and Reaſon; and to deny it any Place in Religion, looks like an Attempt to put out Men's Eyes, and to perſwade them that they had better *feel*, than *ſee* their Way. Again, you ſay, p. 211. "That natu-
"ral Reaſon has no Connection with Vir-
"tue

" tue and Goodneſs, and therefore ſure-
" ly can have no Connection with our
" Salvation; and that for this plain
" Reaſon, which you are pleas'd like-
" wiſe to call the fulleſt Demonſtration,
" *viz.* becauſe our Goodneſs bears no
" Proportion to our intellectual Abili-
" ties of Reaſon; and therefore you
" think there is no Connection between
" them." Which is juſt as ſound and wiſe a Concluſion, as if you ſhould ſay, that there is no Connection or Communication between the *Heart* and the *Head*, becauſe there is no Proportion between them. Again, you affirm, p. 228. " That the Goſpel ſpeaks only
" to the Heart, and nothing but the
" Heart can either receive or reject it."
That the good Diſpoſition of the Heart is a great Help to clear reaſoning, and the ready Way to attain a competent meaſure of ſaving Knowledge; and that the bad Diſpoſition of the Heart often darkens the Mind, and brings a Cloud over the Underſtanding, are certain and un-

undoubted Truths: But that the Goſpel ſpeaks to the Heart only, and not to the Underſtanding, is a groundleſs and dangerous Poſition. Did our Saviour ſpeak to the *Heart only*, and not to the *Heart* and *Underſtanding both*, when he bid his Diſciples to be *wiſe as Serpents and harmleſs as Doves?* Did he after his Reſurrection, ſpeak to the *Heart only*, and not to their *Senſes* and *Underſtanding*, when he ſaid, *handle me and ſee, for a Spirit hath not Fleſh and Bones, as ye ſee me have?* Did St. *Paul*, in preaching the Goſpel, ſpeak only to the *Heart* of King *Agrippa*, when he put this Queſtion to him, *why ſhould it be thought a Thing incredible with you, that God ſhould raiſe the Dead?* Did he before this ſpeak only to the *Hearts* of his *Athenian* Auditors, when he declared unto them the God whom they ignorantly worſhipped, and prov'd the Spirituality of his Nature, and his univerſal Dominion, by Arguments drawn from natural Reaſon, and from

the

the Teſtimony of one of their own Poets? What wild Work would be made in Religion, what Anarchy and Confuſion would there be found in the great and little World, if your Doctrine ſhould once come to be generally entertain'd? But as you deny our *reaſoning* Faculties any Share in the *Reception* or *Rejection* of the Goſpel, or any Help or *Communication* from God in Matters of Religion: So in the next Place, you do, in effect, rob God himſelf of his great Prerogative of giving Life, by making *Adam* the Original and Fountain of natural Life to all his Poſterity. That we derive from him a corrupt Nature, is a ſad, but undeniable Truth: But that we owe our Life directly and immediately to another Cauſe, even to God, is as plain a Dictate both of natural and reveal'd Religion. But you, on the contrary, affirm "that the firſt "*Adam* was made to be a Fountain or "Original of a *natural Life* to Men, "p. 260." Again, "we bear the Image

"of

" of the firſt *Adam*, by having *his Na-*
" *ture and Life* in us, derived from
" him." *Ib.* Again, " *Chriſt* is a Rai-
" ſer of a new *Birth* and *Life* in us,
" in the ſame Reality as we have our
" natural Birth and Life from *Adam*,
" p. 261." Once more, " *Chriſt* is the
" *Parent* of a ſpiritual Man in us, in
" the ſame Reality, as *Adam* is the Pa-
" rent of our natural Life, p. 262."
Now tho' here your Expreſſions are clear and eaſy to be underſtood, and repeated with ſome Variation, no leſs than four Times, yet I am apt to think that they dropt from you unawares, and are the Reſult of *Inconſideration* and not of *Principle:* That is, they are not what you eſpouſe, or contend for, or labour to prove, as you have thoſe I have already conſider'd: Tho' by theſe you diſcover ſome Confuſedneſs of Thought, and that you make no Diſtinction between *Creation* and *Generation.* Men can *beget*, but can't *make* Children; they are Inſtruments to *convey*, but can't

give, *Life* to them. No, this is an Act of *Omnipotence*, and an Act of *Creation*. And for this we acknowledge God to be our *Creator*. For *none but God can give Life*, and when he gives Life, he gives or creates a *new Being*.

I ſhall cloſe my Remarks with what, I am ſure, to common Readers, muſt appear a mere Paradox—" Thus he to " whom God has given the Grace of " *Penitence*, for that Reaſon, *prays* for " Penitence; he that has already re- " ceiv'd the Gift of Faith, for that Rea- " ſon prays, *Lord help thou mine Un-* " *belief*; and he that is *fulleſt* of Righ- " teouſneſs, feels the greateſt *Hunger* " and *Thirſt* after it, p. 299." Strange that Satiety ſhould occaſion Hunger! our Saviour's Promiſe and Encouragement is, *Bleſſed are they that hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs*; *for they ſhall be filled*: But it would be but a poor Reward and Encouragement, if after they are *filled* or *fulleſt* of Righteouſneſs,

ouſneſs, they ſhall ſtill, as you affirm, *feel the greateſt Hunger and Thirſt.* But did you mean no more by theſe Words than that one Degree of Virtue and Goodneſs will incline and diſpoſe us to long and to ſeek after more; what Occaſion was there for your expreſſing yourſelf in ſuch a dark *Ænigmatical* Manner? This is not the Way to inſtruct and edify. But if you meant any Thing elſe, the Senſe is as dark as the Expreſſions.

And now, Sir, I am ſorry to ſay it; but for the Sake and Love of *Truth* (which forbids *Reſpect of Perſons*) and for the Sake of the *younger Clergy*, to whom you have addreſs'd your Book, and who by the Authority of your Name may poſſibly be led into a wrong Way of Thinking, pernicious to themſelves, and deſtructive to the Peace of the Church, I can't but declare, that you have unhappily open'd a Way for the groſs Errors and fatal Deluſions of *Antichriſtianiſm* to enter in at, and have really

really and plainly (tho' I hope and believe, very undeſignedly) laid down the Elements of that *Myſtery of Iniquity*; which will appear in nothing more, than in decrying and diſcountenancing the Uſe and Principles of ſound Reaſon, and ſubſtituting other Rules and Methods of judging in it's Stead; and particularly diſplay itſelf in either openly attacking or ſecretly undermining reveal'd Religion, eſpecially the Chriſtian Ordinances, and more particularly that of the Lord's Supper, that great Bulwark of Chriſtianity, and ſtrong Fortreſs againſt the Enemy.

Theſe Things I leave to your ſerious Conſideration, and do heartily wiſh they may have the intended Effect, to convince you of your many and great Errors: If not, I hope, they will be a Means, by the Bleſſing of God, to prevent others from being ſeduced by them.

I am, Sir,

Your humble Servant,

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE *HOLY EUCHARIST* Vindicated and Explain'd.

JOHN VI. 51.

I am the living Bread, which came down from Heaven: If any Man eat of this Bread, he ſhall live for ever: And the Bread that I will give, is my Fleſh, which I will give for the Life of the World.

THE Doctrine of the two Sacraments which *Chriſt* has ordain'd for perpetual Uſe in his Church, is ſo neceſſary, ſo important, and ſo fundamental a Doctrine, that 'tis no Wonder if the Enemy of Souls labours more than ordinarily to inſtil into the Minds of Chriſtians, wrong Notions and Conceptions, concerning theſe moſt uſeful and divine Inſtitutions; as being the principal Channels and Convey-

ances of ſpiritual Grace and heavenly Bleſſings; the Means which God has appointed for admitting us into Covenant with him, or for confirming us afterwards in that holy Covenant, of infuſing a Principle of new Life into our Souls, and of transforming us, by degrees, into his own Image! the Pledges to aſſure us of our Myſtical Union and Communion with *Chriſt* and his Church; the diſtinguiſhing Marks and Badges of our Chriſtian Profeſſion, and, when rightly uſed, the Seals and Tokens of our Adoption and Eternal Inheritance. But now if theſe ſtanding Ordinances in the Church of *Chriſt*, of ſuch Uſe, Neceſſity and Importance, ſhould, thro' Careleſſneſs or Perverſeneſs, happen to be miſapplied or miſunderſtood; if theſe pure Fountains of living Water ſhould once come to be tainted and corrupted by falſe or fallacious Interpretations, we can't then reaſonably hope or expect, that they will have thoſe wholſome and ſaving Effects upon the Souls of Men, which they were intended to produce. Common Chriſtians can't be ſuppoſed to know, or hear, or be able to underſtand all that is written or publiſh'd on this weighty and myſterious Subject. But as the Enemy is always watching Opportunities to ſow his Tares, and never wanting to ſcatter and diffuſe the Poiſon of falſe Doctrine, 'tis the Duty of thoſe that watch for Souls, to give timely Warning of any ſuch Danger, to endeavour to hinder the ſpreading of the Contagion, and to prevent the Miſchief that may enſue from thence. Now 'tis not unknown

to

to many of this Audience, that a late Author in his Treatiſe on the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, has moſt ſhamefully miſrepreſented the Nature, End, and Deſign of that Solemn Ordinance: But 'tis known perhaps but to few, if to any here preſent, that a Writer on the other Side † has fall'n himſelf into as groſs Errors in this Reſpect, as ſome of thoſe he has endeavour'd to confute and expoſe. One of them is, that he denies thoſe Words of our bleſſed Saviour, *Do this in Remembrance of me*, to be any Part of the Inſtitution of that Sacrament: And another is, that he poſitively and peremptorily affirms, that in this Diſcourſe in the 6th of St. *John*, our Saviour not only *did not*, but *could not* poſſibly ſpeak of the Sacrament of his Supper. Theſe two ſtrange Poſitions I ſhall firſt examine; and then conclude with a practical Application to the preſent Occaſion. And, *firſt*, I am to examine what this Writer has to ſay in defence of his ſtrange Interpretation of that ſolemn Charge, *Do this in Remembrance of me*. Now this he conſiders only as a *Preface* or *Introduction*; or as a *bare Command* to obſerve what our Saviour inſtituted, but not as *any Part* of the Inſtitution itſelf; which, to my Apprehenſion, is making our bleſſed Lord to utter a manifeſt Abſurdity and Contradiction: For according to this

† *See Mr.* Law's *Demonſtration of the groſs and fundamental Errors of a late Book, called,* A plain Account, *&c.*

Conſtruction, we muſt ſuppoſe him to ſay, *Do this in Remembrance of me*, but obſerve withal, that the Remembrance of me is no Part of my Inſtitution: But leſt I ſhould be thought to miſtake or miſrepreſent the Author, I ſhall give you the Sum and Subſtance of what he has ſaid on this Point in his own Expreſſions.

" The Words then, ſays he, *Do this in Re-*
" *membrance of me*, are only the Command to
" obſerve the Inſtitution. —— *Do this*, is a
" Command to do all that had been mention-
" ed in the Inſtitution, and the Words *in Re-*
" *membrance of me*, don't ſhew what the In-
" ſtitution is, or what is to be *done in it*, but
" only the Reaſon why ſuch an Inſtitution,
" whatever it is, was commanded to be obſer-
" ved. —— The Words therefore *in Remem-*
" *brance of me*, are not a Part of the Inſtitu-
" tion, but only a Part of the Command to
" obſerve the Inſtitution, and only ſhew the
" Reaſon why ſuch an Inſtitution is command-
" ed to be obſerved. †

This is the Sum of what he has ſaid, only repeated over and over again, with ſome little Variation. But now in all this he has no Warrant, no Authority, for what he ſo confidently affirms; no Reaſon, nothing to offer, for declarting from the common Acceptation of our Saviour's Words, and faſtening a new and forced Conſtruction of his own upon them: Where-

† Pag. 94, 95.

by

by he has endeavour'd (as far as bare Words and Aſſertions, without Reaſon or Argument, could go) to take away *the one great and general End* of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; ſince the *Remembrance* of our bleſſed Saviour in this Holy Ordinance is ſo neceſſary and ſo eſſential a Part of the Inſtitution, that without it all the reſt can ſignify nothing. I can't imagine what could make this Writer to overlook ſuch plain Things, or what could induce him to put ſo ſtrain'd and abſurd a Senſe upon our Saviour's Words; unleſs it were, that thereby he might hope to furniſh himſelf with an invincible Argument againſt the Author of the *Plain Account*; who giving but a lame and imperfect Interpretation of thoſe Words of Inſtitution, and building the Main of his Scheme upon this weak Foundation, he might poſſibly think that he could not more effectually confute him, than by denying theſe Words to be any Part of the Inſtitution; which was giving up the *Whole* to defend a *Part*. For the Whole is concluded in theſe Words, — *Do this in Remembrance of me.*—*Do this*, reſpecting the outward Actions of eating Bread and drinking of the Cup; and *in Remembrance of me*, pointing at the End and Deſign, and proper Application of them, to the Thing intended and ſignified thereby. If this Writer would have anſwer'd any Thing to the Purpoſe, he ought to have oppoſed a wrong or imperfect Interpretation, by ſubſtituting the right one in its Room; which therefore, for the fuller Satisfaction, and

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for the better Confirmation of your Faith in this Matter, I ſhall here endeavour myſelf to give you in few Words. This Expreſſion then, *In Remembrance of me*, is the ſtrongeſt, the moſt proper, and the moſt comprehenſive, of any that could be made uſe of on this Occaſion. For to *remember* a Perſon or Friend, or to have him in Mind, implies, according to the Quality of that Perſon, and the Relation he ſtands in to us, all that Duty and Reſpect which we owe to him, conſider'd in himſelf or with relation to us. And this applied to our bleſſed Saviour, imports and comprehends every Thing that is required of us, in order to a due Preparation to, and worthy Participation of, the Holy Sacrament, as a lively Faith and Truſt in his Merits, a great Care to pleaſe him, a true Sorrow for having offended him, a thankful Acknowledgment of what he is to us, and of what he has ſuffer'd for us, frequent Thoughts and devout Affections towards him, a due Regard to the ſeveral Members of his Body, and a ready Obedience and a chearful Submiſſion to his bleſſed Will. When *Solomon* bids the young Man to remember his Creator in the Days of his Youth, he does not mean *a bare Act of Memory*, but *ſuch a Remembrance* as contains or infers all that is due from a Creature to his Creator. And when the penitent Thief applied to *Chriſt* in theſe Words, *Lord, remember me, when thou comeſt into thy Kingdom*, we ſee how many great and good Things were included in that Remembrance. And could

could we remember our Saviour with ſomething of the like Affection, that he remembred the penitent Thief, we could not fail of celebrating and partaking of the Euchariſt in a right, acceptable and worthy Manner. That theſe Words then, *Do this in Remembrance of me*, do really belong to, and are a Part of, the Inſtitution, may appear, in ſome Meaſure, from this brief Explication of them. But to direct any the meaneſt Chriſtian to ſatisfy himſelf in this Point, let him only ask himſelf this plain Queſtion: For what End did our Lord inſtitute his Supper? And is not the firſt obvious Anſwer to this Queſtion, *For the Remembrance of himſelf?* And this is no other than what St. *Paul* expreſly declares, or plainly intimates, when he delivers to us the Form of Inſtitution, as he received it from our Lord himſelf; and which concludes thus, — *This do ye, as often as you drink it it, in Remembrance of me*: Which is the ſame as if our Lord had ſaid, whenſoever ye drink this Cup, or perform this Service, this is the End and Deſign you are to propoſe, the *Doing this in Remembrance of me*; i. e. out of Love and Reſpect to me, and to my Honour and Glory. St. *Luke* takes Notice of theſe Words only at the Breaking of the *Bread*; but St. *Paul* mentions them after, or at the Delivery of *each* of the Elements, which ſhews, that they relate to the whole Service. We may likewiſe obſerve that they are inſerted, as I may ſay, into the very Body of the Inſtitution. And accordingly,

ly, our Church has inſerted them in her Conſecration-Prayer, which ſhews that ſhe look'd upon them not as *diſtinct from*, but as really *belonging to* the Inſtitution itſelf. And 'tis farther obſervable, that ſhe has wiſely and piouſly ordered and contrived, that every Communicant ſhall be put in Mind of this great End of the Sacrament, at the very Time of the Delivery of the Bread and Cup. And indeed the Words are ſo far from being *only* a Command to obſerve this Ordinance, that they ſeem to be mentioned here by our Lord with a particular View and Deſign to fix our Attention, and to turn our Thoughts upon that *one general End*, contain'd in and expreſs'd by them, *The Commemoration of himſelf*. The breaking and eating of Bread, and the pouring out and drinking of Wine, tho' in a religious and ſolemn Manner, ſignify nothing, without doing the one and the other in Remembrance of *Chriſt*. 'Tis this that makes thoſe Actions *ſacramental*; and in which the very *Life* and *Eſſence* of the Sacrament conſiſts. The other are only *ſymbolical* and *circumſtantial*, not neceſſary in themſelves, nor unalterable in their own Nature, ſince *Chriſt* might have appointed any other Signs to be uſed in Memory of him: But the Obligation to *remember him*, is neceſſary, indiſpenſible, and unchangeable: And therefore the Remembering him in the Way he has preſcrib'd, is the very Soul and Subſtance of this Sacrament, the very Thing to be *done in it*; and without which all

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the reſt would be mere empty Shew and Ceremony: Nay, the very outward and viſible Signs he has appointed to be uſed in this holy Ordinance, are particularly contrived and deſign'd for the ſame End, to put us in Remembrance of him, and to repreſent to us, in a lively Manner, the meritorious Cauſe of our Redemption, his Body broken and given, and his Blood pour'd out on the Croſs for us. By theſe our Memories are continually refreſh'd, and by theſe we *ſhew forth the Lord's Death till he come:* So wiſely has our gracious Redeemer order'd Matters, that we may *not forget him*, and ſo earneſtly does he deſire that we may *remember* him. From all which, I truſt, it is abundantly manifeſt, that the Words I have been conſidering, are to be taken in the plain, literal, and obvious Senſe, in which our Church underſtands them; and in which the Generality of Chriſtians have ever underſtood them.

I come now to examine the ſame Author's bold Aſſertions in relation to our Saviour's Diſcourſe in the 6th of St. *John:* I call them *bold Aſſertions*, becauſe 'tis too preſumptuous for *fallible* Man to declare *poſitively* what our bleſſed Saviour could *poſſibly* mean or not mean by ſuch a Doctrine, as is on all Hands allow'd to be very myſterious, and the Senſe of which has been the Subject of much Diſpute. And yet this Writer does not ſcruple to aſſert more than once, "That in the 6th of St. *John* our Saviour "did not ſpeak of the Sacrament, nor could "poſſibly ſpeak of it, for this plain Reaſon, "becauſe he ſpoke of the *Truth*, the *Reality*,

" and the *Thing* itſelf.' '† In Anſwer to which I need only obſerve, that our bleſſed Lord did not deliver Doctrines to no Purpoſe, or ſuch as ſhould have no Effect. The Doctrine therefore deliver'd, in the 6th of St. *John*, was to take place, and have Effect, either *with* or *without* the Sacrament of his Supper. If the *Truth*, the *Reality*, and the *Thing* itſelf, could be ordinarily enjoy'd or attain'd *without* the Uſe of the Sacrament, to what End and Purpoſe was the Sacrament inſtituted? By making therefore the *Reality*, as he is pleaſed to call the Thing ſignified, to be wholly and entirely diſtinct and ſeparate from *Chriſt*'s ſacramental Body and Blood, and by affirming that in ſpeaking of one he could not poſſibly ſpeak of the other, he does in Effect, or by plain Conſequence, make the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper unneceſſary and void. *Unneceſſary*, becauſe the Thing intended thereby can, according to this Doctrine, be fully enjoy'd without it; and *void*, becauſe he makes the whole Nature of the Sacrament to conſiſt only of one Part, *the outward viſible Sign*, and leaves out the other Part, *the inward ſpiritual Grace*. For he affirms, that our Saviour in the 6th of St. *John* did not ſpeak of the Sacrament, nor could poſſibly ſpeak of it, for this plain Reaſon, becauſe he ſpoke of the *Truth*, the *Reality*, and the *Thing* itſelf; therefore according to him, the *Truth*, the *Reality*, and the Thing itſelf (which is what others expreſs by the *inward ſpiritual Grace*) is not *in* the Sacrament; for if it were, then in ſpeak-

† Pag. 111. *and ſee likewiſe* p. 113.

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ing of *this*, our Saviour might ſpeak of the *Sacrament*, which this Writer aſſerts he could not *poſſibly* ſpeak of. On the contrary, I hope to make it appear, that it is not only *poſſible*, but *highly probable*, that *Chriſt* did ſpeak of the Sacrament in the 6th of St. *John*. And for Proof of this, I ſhall offer only at preſent one ſingle Argument, deducible from what our Lord declares in the Words I have choſen for my Text.—*I am the living Bread which came down from Heaven: If any Man eat of this Bread, he ſhall live forever: and the Bread that I will give, is my Fleſh, which I will give for the Life of the World.* In which Words our Saviour makes a Tranſition, or paſſes from the Subject he had been ſpeaking of before, to a new Matter; ſo that this Verſe concludes the former, and introduces the latter. In the foregoing Verſes he had repreſented and offer'd himſelf to the *Jews* under the Figure of Bread, as the *Bread of God*, the *Bread of Life*, the *living Bread*, the *Bread that came down from Heaven*. In this Verſe he begins to tell them of his *Fleſh* and *Blood*. In the former Part he ſpeaks only in the *preſent* Tenſe —I *am* the Bread, and this *is* the Bread; but here he ſpeaks in the *future*—*The Bread that I* WILL *give is my Fleſh, which I* WILL *give for the Life of the World*. Before he ſpeaks of himſelf, *ad Captum Judæorum*, as the true living Bread, of which the *Manna* was a Type and Figure. For as that was given immediately by God, and ſent down from Heaven for the Support of the *Iſraelites* in the Wilderneſs, and ſerv'd inſtead of all other Food, and is ſaid, according to an

ancient Tradition, to have been ſuited to every Man's Palate: So *Chriſt* came down from Heaven to offer himſelf for the Life, Food, and Support of Mankind, in their Pilgrimage thro' this World. And he that has *Chriſt* has all Things, and can want nothing beſide, which is the Meaning of thoſe Expreſſions of his, in the Thirty-fifth Verſe — *He that cometh to me, ſhall never hunger, and he that believeth on me, ſhall never thirſt.* The Reaſon is, becauſe *Chriſt* alone is abundantly able to ſatisfy all the Deſires of the Soul, and to ſupply all its Needs. Now ſo far as this, we may and ought perhaps to underſtand our Saviour's Diſcourſe chiefly of *ſpiritual Meat* and *ſpiritual Feeding*, under the figurative Expreſſion of Bread. And once again, *viz.* in the Fifty-eighth Verſe, he ſpeaks of himſelf under the ſame Figure--*This is that Bread which came down Heaven: Not as your Fathers did eat Manna, and are dead: He that eateth of this Bread, ſhall live for ever.* But here 'tis plain that he means, by *eating this Bread* ſomething more than meer ſpiritual Feeding, even the *eating his Fleſh*, in a *Sacramental* Way, as he had ſufficiently inimated in the Verſes juſt before: Beginning now to accommodate and appropriate to the Sacrament of his Supper what he had ſaid only or chiefly before of *ſpiritual Food* and *ſpiritual Feeding*, under the Figure and Type of Bread; which the *Jews* might have underſtood, in ſome meaſure, from his alluding ſo often to the *Manna* in the Wilderneſs. But ſince they were now ſo dull of Hearing and apprehending what he had ſaid of himſelf under a Figure ſo well known and

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ſo familiar to them, he proceeds to ſhew the Neceſſity of believing ſomething ſtill *more Myſterious*, and ſeems to take Occaſion from hence to inculcate into his Diſciples, the great Doctrine of the *Euchariſt*. For in the following Verſes he ſpeaks of what is properly and ſtrictly *material*, even of his own Body and Blood, not indeed altogether as they *then* were, but as they ſhould be *hereafter*, i. e. when ſeparated, and he himſelf ſhould be ſacrificed and ſlain. This is evidently implied in the Words of my Text——*The Bread that I will give is my Fleſh, which I will give for the Life of the World.* Which Words being ſpoken of ſomething *yet to come*, and which the *Jews* could not *then* partake of, muſt be ſuppoſed to have reſpect either to the Sacrifice on the Croſs, or to the Sacrament of the holy Supper; and if to *Either*, then to *Both*. For, 1ſt, allowing that our Saviour by theſe Words, *the Bread that I will give is my Fleſh, which I will give for the Life of the World*, meant the Offering his Body or Fleſh as a Sacrifice for the Sins of the World; if he did not at the ſame Time deſign to make a farther Application of them to the Sacrament he was to inſtitute, his ſpeaking of our believing in him, and reaping the Benefits of that Sacrifice by ſuch Expreſſions as *Bread*, and *Fleſh*, and *Blood*, and *Eating*, and *Drinking*, would be apt to lead us into one of theſe two Errors, *viz.* either to believe that he here ſpoke of the Sacrament, when he did not; or elſe to conclude, that we might profitably and effectually feed, and feaſt upon him, without partaking of his Sacramental Body and Blood, which would

would render that Sacrament needleſs and ſuperfluous. And then 2dly, allowing that our Saviour by the Words beforemention'd did intend to ſpeak of the Sacrament he ſhould afterwards inſtitute, this has a neceſſary Reference to the Sacrifice he was to offer; without having Regard to which, our ſacramental Feeding muſt be vain and of no Effect. 'Tis plain then to me, that the Words thus conſidered, have a direct and immediate Relation both to the grand Sacrifice of the Croſs, and to our partaking of the Benefits of that Sacrifice in the holy *Euchariſt*. And all that follows is moſt reaſonably interpreted according to this Senſe, as particularly, *Except ye eat the Fleſh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood, ye have no Life in you.* i. e. except ye eat the one, and drink the other in the Sacrament of my Appointment. But this could not be, before he had inſtituted that Sacrament, or before he had offered the great Sacrifice on the Croſs, and given his *Fleſh for the Life of the World*. This indeed was new and ſtrange Doctrine to the *Jews*, and to his Diſciples too. They only *murmured* before, but now they were *offended*, and ſtrove amongſt themſelves, ſaying, *how can this Man give us his Fleſh to eat*? Yea, they thought this ſo hard a Saying, that many of his Diſciples left him thereupon, and refus'd to hear him any more. And yet this is no other than the Doctrine of the *Euchariſt*: And all that he here ſays may fairly, and without any manner of Force, be interpreted this

this Way, and can't reaſonably be underſtood in any other Senſe. For as 'tis evident beyond all Contradiction, that our Saviour here ſpeaks of his *material* Fleſh that ſhould be given for the Life of the World, ſo it is no leſs evident that this *material* Fleſh can be eaten or partaken of, only in a *Sacramental* Way. Or whatever may be ſaid of *Feeding* upon *Chriſt* by Faith *out* of the Sacrament, this is certain, that ſuch ſpiritual Feeding *without the ſacramental*, is and muſt be *imperfect*, as the *ſacramental* likewiſe would be *without the Spiritual*. Both therefore muſt go together, to make a compleat Service, holy, acceptable unto God.

Having thus endeavour'd to vindicate and clear our Saviour's Doctrine and Diſcourſe concerning the Sacrament of his holy Supper from ſome late Miſrepreſentations, I ſhall now conclude with a practical Application of the Words of my Text to the preſent Occaſion—— Now our Bleſſed Lord, by declaring himſelf to be the *living Bread which came down from Heaven*, that this Bread is his *Fleſh*, that this *Fleſh* he would *give for the Life of the World*; and that thoſe who ſhould eat and partake of this *Fleſh* in a ſacramental Way, and in a worthy Manner, *ſhall live for ever*, ſets before us, on the one Hand, the Nature, End, and Deſign of this holy Inſtitution, and our Privilege, Duty, and Obligations on the other. 'Tis neceſſary for us to believe and underſtand, in ſome meaſure, Things ſpiritual and inviſible, Things relating to the preſent State of our Souls, and our Hopes

of

of future Happineſs: But conſidering the Weakneſs of our Capacities, and the Dulneſs of our Apprehenſions, we could hardly have attain'd to a competent Knowledge and Conception of theſe Things, without the Help of ſome outward and viſible Signs, which therefore our merciful Saviour has wiſely provided in this Caſe: And what Signs could he have choſen more proper or more ſignificant for this Purpoſe, than *Bread* and *Wine*, both to remind us of his paſt Sufferings, and of his Preſence with the Faithful? The firſt I need not explain, and the other may eaſily be underſtood. For as the Bread we eat or take in, is united to our Bodies, ſo *Chriſt*, in the Sacrament, is preſent with, and unites himſelf to, the Souls of the Faithful. As common Bread is the chief Means to ſupport and maintain the Animal Life, ſo the ſacramental Bread and Wine, when duly receiv'd, ſtrengthen and invigorate the ſpiritual Life. *Bread* in Scripture is put for all Sorts of Proviſion, and often ſtands for the Whole of the Entertainment: And this is true likewiſe, and in an higher Senſe, of that living Bread which came down from Heaven, which is able not to only ſatisfy the empty Soul, and to repleniſh the hungry Soul with Goodneſs; but, like a Banquet or Marriage-Feaſt, to chear and revive the Spirits, eſpecially as 'tis attended with the comfortable Aſſurance of the Forgiveneſs of Sins, and of a Title to the Promiſe of eternal Life; which Promiſe our Saviour is pleas'd to make to true

Believers

Believers and worthy Receivers, no leſs than five or ſix Times in this Chapter, within the Compaſs of a few Verſes. Now ſuch a frequent Repetition of one and the ſame Promiſe, to one and the ſame Duty, plainly intimates both how much Mankind ſtand in need of ſome powerful Spur and Incentive to excite their Care and Induſtry in this Reſpect, and what peculiar Privileges and Advantages are annex'd to worthy Communicating, that is ſupported and encourag'd, you ſee, by ſo ſure a Proſpect of the Mighty, the everlaſting Recompence. Our Lord's *dying Command* in this Caſe, to *Do this in Remembrance of him*, had been Inducement enough, one would think, to engage us in the Diſcharge of ſo neceſſary a Duty. 'Tis a farther Motive to conſider the *preſent* Benefits we receive thereby, and the great *Need* and *Occaſion* we have of frequent Supplies of this living Bread and heavenly Food, to quicken our languiſhing Spirits, and revive our drooping Obedience. But when to all this is added the peculiar Promiſe of eternal Life, and our having hereby a ſure Title to this exceeding great and precious Promiſe, how ſweetly and forcibly ſhould this incline us to the Performance of a Duty, ſo reaſonable in itſelf, and ſo highly beneficial in its Conſequences? Since there is no Duty or Service required of us, to which the Promiſe of eternal Life is ſo fully, ſo frequently, and ſo ſolemnly made, as to that of worthily communicating: By which likewiſe we do more eſpecially draw nigh unto

God, and invite him to draw nigh unto us; yea, to dwell in us, and make his Abode with us, that ſo he may govern us by his Spirit, and guide us by his Counſel here, and after that receive us unto Glory.

Now to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghoſt, be aſcrib'd, as is moſt due, all Honour and Glory, Obedience and Thankſgiving for ever. Amen.

A

SHORT and ſafe RULE

WHEREBY

To diſtinguiſh between falſe Miracles and True.

THE uſual Marks or *Criteria* of true and falſe Miracles, are the Nature and Number of the Miracles themſelves, the ſeveral Circumſtances that attend them, the moral Qualifications of the Agents, the Characters of thoſe by whom they have been recorded and tranſmitted to us, and the Tendency of the Doctrines deſign'd to be eſtabliſh'd by them. For Miracles, whether true or falſe, are never wrought for mere Shew and Oſtentation, for Amuſement only, or for Aſtoniſhment; but in order to create a Belief of ſome Truth or Falſhood. Now all the particular Marks before-mention'd, have, in a late Controverſy, been critically, and impartially examined by ſeveral eminent Writers. But thoſe learned Diſcourſes treat chiefly of Miracles that are paſt; and are not ſo directly levelled, or ſo particularly adapted to the Capacities of common Readers, but that ſomething farther may be requiſite to give *them* a right Underſtanding of this Matter, and to direct them how to diſtinguiſh true Miracles from falſe. There

is a ſhorter Method, that is fully ſufficient to ſecure them againſt the Wiles of Impoſtors, and the cunning Craftineſs of thoſe that lie in wait to deceive: And a Time is coming when their Faith and Judgment, in this Reſpect, will be tried to the uttermoſt; and it muſt be no ſmall Advantage, in ſuch a Caſe, to be arm'd and provided with ſome ſhort Rules and Directions before-hand. If the old Enemies of Chriſtianity could hope to juſtify their own Infidelity, or to draw off others from the Faith, by ſuch a poor and weak Pretence, as that of a Heathen Emperor and Magician performing one or two Works of Wonder (the Performance of which, however, was never yet proved by any proper or ſufficient Evidence) which they would make to vie with the real, unconteſted, numerous Miracles of our Saviour; what Succeſs may not *Antichriſt* promiſe himſelf, when he ſhall come to oppoſe the Miracles and Doctrines of *Chriſt*, by a Multitude of lying Wonders, and all *Deceivableneſs of Unrighteouſneſs?* In order to countermine his Deſigns, to lay open his Devices, to detect his Deluſions, and to help the Chriſtians of thoſe Days to diſcern the Impoſture and to avoid the Snare, two Witneſſes propheſying in Sackcloth (which are generally ſuppos'd to be *Enoch* and *Elias*) will be ſent by God into the World. For though our bleſſed Lord has fully aſſured us, that none of the Elect ſhall be finally or fatally deceiv'd by the falſe Miracles of Antichriſt; yet this does not hinder, but rather

ther ſuppoſe that proper Means will be requiſite, and likewiſe actually uſed to guard and ſecure them againſt ſuch Deception. I call them *the falſe Miracles of Antichriſt*, to diſtinguiſh them from the *true* Miracles wrought by *Chriſt*; not that they will be *falſe* in every Reſpect, or that all of them (as ſome imagine) will have an Appearance only, and nothing of Reality. But I call them *falſe*, (and ſo far they certainly are) in that they are not the immediate Effect of a divine Power, and becauſe they tempt Men to believe a Falſhood or Lie, to believe the Doctrine of Antichriſt, and to reject the Doctrine of *Chriſt*: And therefore in this Senſe, as well as others, St. *Paul* might properly term them *lying Wonders*; i. e. not lying in the *Operation*, but in the *Effects* they are intended to produce. For this fatal Deceiver will actually cauſe *Fire to come down from Heaven*, and have Power to perform *in reality* other Works of Wonder, that may ſeem to require no leſs than a divine Power for their Performance. And accordingly 'tis very obſervable, that when the *Jews* required of our Saviour to ſhew them a Sign from Heaven (*Mark* viii. 11, 12.) *he ſighed deeply in his Spirit*, as foreſeeing thoſe dreadful and deſtructive Deluſions that will prevail in the World at the Coming of Antichriſt, by Means of ſuch Signs from Heaven. But there are other Signs which he will diſplay before Men, not in Reality, but only in Semblance or Appearance. And theſe are the Signs that I ſhall chiefly conſider:

For

For as to the other Sort, they can only be guarded againſt by the Conſideration of thoſe Doctrines which they are deſign'd to countenance and propagate. And this is ſo plain a Caſe, and ſo fully determin'd in Scripture, that the greateſt Miracles which can be conceiv'd (if any ſuch Thing could be) will not juſtify or excuſe a Man for ſuffering himſelf to be drawn thereby to an Act of Idolatry, or to the Denial of *Chriſt* and his Goſpel, or to the committing any known and preſumptuous Sin. The other ſort of Signs will be found in the Reſult to be no other than the mere Images and Imitations of Things; whereby the grand Deceiver will groſly impoſe upon ſome one or more of the Senſes of Men: I ſay, *Upon ſome one or more of the Senſes.* For even the Devil himſelf, as great a Proficient as he is in the Art of Deception, is not able, and never was yet permitted, to deceive all the five Senſes at once.

In the Arguments made uſe of againſt Tranſubtantiation, it has been generally obſerv'd, that that abſurd Doctrine has a direct Tendency to weaken and ſubvert the Foundation of the Chriſtianity, as built upon the Evidence of Senſe. And this it manifeſtly has, as it oppoſes and contradicts the concurrent Teſtimony of four of the five Senſes; which four Senſes, *viz. Seeing, Feeling, Taſting, and Smelling*, conſider'd jointly, or as agreeing in one and the ſame Teſtimony, we may moſt juſtly conclude, are not *capable* of being deceiv'd. But this is more than can be affirm'd *as to Particulars*, or with

with reſpect to the Senſes of *Seeing* and *Hearing*, which are both liable to great Deception, and may eaſily be impoſed upon by the Deluſions of *Satan*. For 'tis in his Power, by the Permiſſion of God, to preſent ſuch Objects, and to occaſion ſuch Sounds, diſtinguiſhable by the Eye, and Ear, as have nothing of Truth and Reality in them, and are only meer Shadows and Semblances of Things. And his Power and Policy is perhaps ſeen in nothing more, than in working upon the Fancy or *Imagination*; which, we may find by Experience, will ſometimes receive and repreſent Objects to the Mind, as fully and ſtrongly, as even the *viſive* Faculty itſelf. His Buſineſs therefore, in point of Deluſion, is to leſſen and obſcure the one, and at the ſame Time to quicken and invigorate the other, or elſe, by the help of ſome external Repreſentation, and an inward Working upon the Fancy, to impoſe both on the Sight and Minds of Spectators. And how able and experienc'd an Artiſt he is in this Reſpect, we may learn, as from other Inſtances in Scripture, ſo particularly from that remarkable one, of his drawing and painting, in a Moment of Time, before our Saviour, *all the Kingdoms of the World and the Glory of them*, which were at once ſenſibly impreſs'd upon his Sight and Imagination. And then, as he is *Prince of the Power of the Air*, we may eaſily ſuppoſe that he is able to cauſe ſtrange and preternatural Sounds and Noiſes, like thoſe Ratlings of Chariots and Horſes, which, as we read in Scripture, have

ſome-

ſometimes been heard by whole Armies, and ſtruck ſuch Terror and Conſternation into them, as to make them fly away ſooner and faſter, than if a real Enemy had been approaching them. It can't then be denied but that our Senſes of *Seeing* and *Hearing* are ſubject to Deluſion. But for a Counterpoiſe to this, God has wiſely and mercifully ordain'd, that the Senſe of *Feeling*, ſo long as that remains in us, ſhould not be capable of being *impoſed upon*. We may think and believe that we ſee and hear *real* Objects and Sounds, when we ſee and hear only the Images and Imitations of them: But we can't feel what is not *tangible* or *palpable*, or believe that we don't feel what we do. Now upon the Teſtimony of this unerring Senſe, joined with the Teſtimony of the other Senſes, the Divine Authority of the holy Scripture is founded, ſo far as they come confirm'd to us by the Evidence of Miracles. But the lying Wonders or falſe Miracles wrought by the Agency and Inſtruments of *Satan*, rely wholly upon the uncertain Reports of thoſe fallible Senſes of *Seeing* and *Hearing*. They can't abide the Teſt or Probation of *Touch*. They are no ſooner attempted to be *felt* or *handled*, but the Cheat is diſcover'd. And this we ſhall find, upon Examination, to be the peculiar and diſtinguiſhing Mark in Scripture between *true* and *falſe* Miracles. The *Magicians* that withſtood *Moſes*, could go ſo far with their Inchantments, as to imitate the two Firſt Miracles perform'd in the Preſence of

of *Pharoah*, the Turning Water into Blood, and bringing up Frogs upon the Land; which required no more for Belief, than the bare *Sight* of the credulous *Egyptians*, and was, doubtleſs, ſubjected to no other Trial or Examination. But when they attempted to proceed farther, and to extend their Inchantments to Things that would not only be *ſeen*, but that muſt likewiſe be *felt*, here their Art failed them, and the Power of the Devil was at a Stand. They could bring up *Frogs* to Appearance, that might be view'd only at ſome Diſtance, but could not produce *Lice*, tho' ſome of the ſmalleſt Inſects in Nature, that were to crawl upon and corrode the Skin. When therefore they ſaw this effected by *Moſes*, and not to be effected by themſelves, they ingenuouſly confeſs'd that this was *the Finger of God*, that is, a Plague or Judgment that was *felt* as well as *ſeen*; and yet the Inſtruments ſuch ſmall, weak, and contemptible Creatures, that the Power which produced them is here properly called only *the Finger of God*. Now it was not becauſe that they were baffled in this Attempt, that theſe Magicians did not venture upon another Experiment of their Skill, as we may at firſt be apt to imagine, but becauſe they plainly ſaw, that all the other Signs, or miraculous Plagues that follow'd, were attended with the ſame *palpable* Evidence; as the Plague of *Flies*, of the Ulcers or *Boils*, of the *Murrain*, of the *Hail*, and of the *Locuſts*. And when *Pharoah* and his Servants ſhut their

Eyes, as it were, and harden'd their Hearts againſt all theſe, and would not be ſoften'd into a Compliance by their own *feeling* Experience, they were then moſt ſuitably puniſh'd in the ninth Plague, with a groſs thick Darkneſs, that *might even be felt*; a ſtrong emphatical Expreſſion of a very great, if not the very greateſt, Degree of Darkneſs; a proper Emblem of the horrid Darkneſs of their own Minds, which they would afterwards be forced to *feel*, and ſmart for, and pointing at that particular Senſe, upon which reſts the main Streſs of all external Evidence in ſuch Caſes; as will farther appear by conſidering the Miracles of *Chriſt*, which will be found, upon Enquiry, to reſt upon the ſame infallible Evidence, being ſuch as were *felt* as well as *ſeen*. One or two Inſtances indeed there are, where the *bare Sight* of the Apoſtles is the *only Evidence* mentioned by the Evangeliſts, (but that alone abundantly ſufficient) as when St. *Peter* in paſſing obſerv'd with his Eyes, and took notice to his Lord, how ſoon the Fig-tree he had curſed was withered away. But as our bleſſed Saviour foreknew that his Miracles would hereafter be imitated by Antichriſt, and what Multitudes of Chriſtians would be deluded by only ſeeing and hearing his *lying Wonders*, he choſe to perform ſuch ſort of Miracles, and in ſuch a Manner, as might not only ſerve for a Confirmation of the Doctrines he then delivered, but likewiſe as *Samplars* or *Patterns*, whereby the Truth of all other Miracles might be tried and examined. 'Tis a ſtrait

Line

Line that ſhews and diſcovers what is crooked. Our Lord's Miracles were all *perfect* in their Kind; plain Demonſtrations of a divine Power, as they were Appeals to what I may call the more judicious of all our Senſes, the Senſe of *Feeling*; which is indeed an *infallible Judge*, and the only one that God has ordain'd in Caſes of this Nature. All Pretenſions then to the Power of working Miracles muſt be brought to this Teſt: If they can't abide the *Touch*, they are to be rejected, and diſcarded as mere Phantoms and Impoſtures. A Man may perform Things to Appearance, that can't be accounted for from natural Cauſes; and yet he is not therefore preſently to be look'd upon and received as one come from God. If he expects to be believed and received as ſuch, let him ſhew ſuch Signs or Wonders as will bear to be *handled*, and may be diſcern'd by the *Touch*. If we take a View of the Miracles of *Chriſt*, we ſhall find this Stamp and Superſcription upon almoſt all of them: But I ſhall conſider only one at preſent, and that is the Miracle of the Loaves. Now here it is to be obſerv'd, that theſe were held in, and diſtributed by, the Hands of the Apoſtles, who declar'd before what Number of Loaves and Fiſhes there were; and the vaſt Multitude that did eat, partake of, were fill'd and ſatisfied with the Loaves and Fiſhes thus given and diſtributed to them, teſtified by their *Feeling* and *Taſting* the Truth of the Multiptication of thoſe Loaves and Fiſhes,

which increas'd or were renewed upon the Hands of the Apoſtles, at the Time of their breaking and diſtributing them, and continued increaſing like the Widow's Cruiſe of Oyl, ſo long as there were empty Veſſels or Perſons to receive them. And 'tis expreſly ſaid, that *they did all eat and were fill'd.* We muſt therefore conclude, that it was really impoſſible for five Thouſand Men, beſides Women and Children at one Time, and four Thouſand at another, to have been all deceiv'd in ſuch a Caſe, with Reſpect to their *Seeing*, *Feeling* and *Taſting*. By ſuch plain undeniable Evidence is almoſt every Miracle of our Saviour proved and aſcertain'd. But thoſe Wonders and Prodigies that will be wrought or repreſented by Antichriſt in the latter Days, will be ſuch only or chiefly, as may be *ſeen*, as *bringing down Fire from Heaven* (tho' that indeed may be *real*, as the Power and Dominion of his Principal is in the Air) *removing Mountains out of their Place, making Iſlands to riſe up out of the Sea*, &c. But nothing will be offer'd to the *Touch*. Not but that many will *feel* the Effects of his Power, at ſome Diſtance off, in their Bodies as well as in their Minds: For he will wholly, in a Manner, act and be acted by the Devil: And Spirits, we know, can act upon Matter, can ſtrike and make Impreſſions upon Bodies, particularly by Means of a poiſonous and noxious Air: But Bodies are not capable of acting upon ſeparate or unbodied Spirits, or of ſtriking or feeling

mere

mere Appearances. Yet notwithſtanding this plain undeniable Defect of his Skill, or his Incapacity to give any *palpable* Demonſtrations of his Power to work Miracles, he will pretend to vie with our bleſſed Saviour in thoſe divine Operations; and in order to delude the People the more, will very probably make uſe of ſome ſuch plauſible Inſinuation as this —"Have you not hitherto believ'd and embraced the Doctrine of Chriſtianity upon the Teſtimony of the Senſes of *others*; and will you not here believe the Teſtimony of *your own* Senſes?" But ſtill it will ſignify little or nothing to his Purpoſe, to make Men believe his lying Wonders in general, or to take Appearances for Realities, unleſs he can perſuade them likewiſe to believe the Inferences, Deductions, and Concluſions he would draw from thence, with Regard to his Pretenſions to divine Worſhip, his Endeavour to ſubvert the great Myſtery of Chriſtianity, and to eſtabliſh his own impious and blaſphemous Doctrines. And Woe to them who ſhall be induced, by his lying Wonders and ſtrong Deluſions, to worſhip the Image of the Beaſt, or to receive his Mark upon their Foreheads, or in their Hands: For then they will be from thenceforth wholly in his Power, and under his Dominion. A diffident and incredulous Temper, therefore, will be a Chriſtian's beſt Guard in thoſe Times, and a Reſolution not to be ſatisfied with any leſs Evidence than that (or ſomewhat like that) which ſatified St. *Thomas*, his beſt Security

curity. And from hence we may more clearly diſcern the adorable Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God, in ſuffering that Apoſtle to be ſo very reſolute and obſtinate in his Demands of a *palpable* Demonſtration of the Truth of our Lord's Reſurrection; which was the crowning Evidence, and without which ſome little Doubts of this prime fundamental Article might poſſibly have remain'd, as we find there were at firſt at every bare Appearance of *Chriſt* to them; and even when he appear'd to above five Hundred Brethren at once, and that too at a Time and Place which himſelf had appointed, ſtill 'tis ſaid, *ſome doubted:* So very liable to Deception is the *bare Sight* of Men, and ſo apprehenſive are they often of the *Fallibility* of this Senſe in particular. But the *palpable* Evidence afforded St. *Thomas*, was, as I may ſay, invincible and irreſiſtible. No wonder then that the Evangeliſts are ſo very punctual in their Mention of the ſeveral Circumſtances of every Miracle wrought by or relating to our Saviour, and that St. *John* in particular, in giving in his Evidence for the Truth, as it is in *Jeſus*, takes ſuch ſpecial Notice of the Teſtimony of this Senſe, in Conjunction with that of others — *That which we have heard, which we have ſeen with our Eyes, which we have look'd upon, and our* HANDS *have* HANDLED *of the Word of Life — declare we unto you.*

But what I have before obſerv'd of Miracles in general, and of our Saviour's in particular, relate

relate to Things that are *paſt*. What are ſtill to come, may be of a different *Species*, different in Operation, and more difficult to be diſtinguiſh'd. For Inſtance, the *two Witneſſes* will be empower'd to vindicate their own Authority, and the Authority of their bleſſed Maſter, by a miraculous Execution of Vengeance upon their Enemies and Oppoſers. This will be done, as 'tis ſaid, by *Fire proceeding out of their Mouth*; but Antichriſt will bring down *Fire from Heaven*; and his Working, as we are expreſly told, will be *after the Working of Satan*, who is the *Prince of the Power of the Air*, and will communicate his Power to him, or act by him as his Inſtrument; and what and how great his Power is, when ſuffer'd to act according to his own Will, may be learnt from what he has done already. This is certain, that there is no Method of Deception but he is a perfect Maſter of; no Temptation we are liable to from the World and the Fleſh, but he can magnify, improve, and enforce to the higheſt Degree. He can heighten the Guſt and Reliſh of ſenſual Pleaſures and Delights, and thereby give a keener Edge to his Temptations. He has, and can ſtill, by God's Permiſſion, alter and vary the Courſe of Nature, raiſe Storms and Tempeſts, inflict Diſeaſes, and all kinds of corporal Maladies, and ſhed a baneful and malignant Influence on the kindly Fruits of the Earth. In a word, whatever Power or Policy he has been ſuffer'd to exer-

exerciſe in former Days, and at different Times, *ſo much at leaſt* we may be aſſured he will have Liberty to exert in the laſt Days, when the *Conſummation of Sin* will be come, and the *Meaſure of Iniquity* is to be filled up. How much farther his Power will be enlarged, or how far it will be ſuffer'd to extend, we can't certainly determine. But there is nothing to be dreaded in this Caſe, but what the Words of St. *Paul* ſeem to imply: For he tells us, that the Coming of Antichriſt will be *after the Working of Satan, with all Power and Signs, and lying Wonders, and with all Deceivableneſs of Unrighteouſneſs:* Expreſſions of a dreadful Sound and vaſt Comprehenſion! And farther, that *God will ſend* the Wicked and Impenitent in thoſe Days *ſtrong Deluſion; that they ſhould believe a Lye.* Theſe Words are *emphatical*, and may literally be render'd *the Energy of Deceit*, importing the very Quinteſſence and Perfection of all Deluſion drawn forth into Act. This being the Caſe, it may be queſtion'd whether even the Senſe of *Feeling* will be wholly exempt from his Power or Attempts; tho' at the ſame Time I think I have good Reaſon to believe, that the due Exerciſe of this one Senſe will enable the Faithful to detect and withſtand all his Deluſions. He may practiſe his Wiles upon ſingle Perſons, upon ſuch as he has Commiſſion from God to try, chaſtiſe, or puniſh, and make them imagine that they *feel* what they do not. But when he performs his *lying*

Wonders

Wonders before a Multitude of People, we may be ſure that none of theſe will be ſubjected to the Probation of this Senſe, and all beſides may be Fallacy and Deluſion. 'Tis this Power or Faculty of *Feeling* that makes us liable to the Force and Violence, at the ſame time that it frees and ſecures us, in a great meaſure, from the Stratagems and Impoſitions of evil Spirits. It is the moſt diſcerning of all the Senſes; and has, in a manner, engroſſed the Name and Character of them all. No Man is judg'd or ſaid to be *inſenſible*, only for being blind or deaf, or for not having a right Diſcernment in his Smell or Taſte. *They only*, in the common Way of Speaking, are ſaid to be ſo, who have either loſt the Uſe of their Reaſon, or their Faculty of Feeling. And this Figure or Compariſon St. *Paul* makes particular choice of, to repreſent, in the ſtrongeſt manner, the deſperate Caſe of a compleat harden'd Sinner, when his Conſcience, as he obſerves, is become *paſt Feeling*; an *Inſenſibility in the Spirit* portending nothing elſe but the Death and Deſtruction of the Soul, as one *in the Fleſh* often does a Gangrene or Mortification. But in this laſt Caſe, Life is ſometimes preſerv'd by a timely Amputation, or the Loſs of a Limb, while many Souls have periſhed for want of the like timely and neceſſary Severity. And therefore, God foreſeeing what a State of *Lethargy*, *Indifference*, and *Inſenſibility*, his Church will fall into in the latter Days, has moſt mercifully, as well as moſt juſtly, determin'd to permit the Coming of

Antichriſt, in order to purge and purify, to probe and pierce the Fleſh andMinds of Chriſtians, to rouze them from their fatal Slumber and ſleepy Condition, and by ſome of the ſharpeſt and roughest Methods to ſnatch them out of the Fire, and bring them to a State of Senſibilty, *that their Spirit may be ſaved in the Day of the Lord Jeſus.*

S. D. G.

FINIS.

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By the SAME AUTHOR,

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The Reſurrection of the Same Body, as aſſerted and illuſtrated by St. Paul.

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